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AMENDMENTS TO THE CLAIMS

The listing below of the claims will replace all prior versions and listings of claims in the present application:

Listing of Claims:

Claim 1 (previously presented): A plate-link chain for engagement with conical disk surfaces of pulleys in continuously variable, conical disk transmissions, said chain comprising: a plurality of chain links extending along a chain movement direction and including side-by-side and end-to-end plate links having openings to receive articulation members formed as pairs of rocker members received in the openings of the plate links and having rocker surfaces supported against each other, wherein at least end faces of the rocker members that operatively contact surfaces of conical disks of a transmission have a nitrogen-enriched outer layer in the form of a carbon-nitrided layer, and wherein the conical disk surfaces engaged by the rocker member end faces have a nitrogen-enriched outer layer in the form of a carbon-nitrided layer.

Claim 2 (currently amended): A thrust link belt for engagement with conical disk surfaces of pulleys in continuously variable, conical disk transmissions, said thrust link belt comprising: at least one closed belt strand in the form of an endless loop, and a plurality of laterally-extending, face-to-back thrust links in the form of plates carried by the strand, wherein at least lateral end faces of the thrust links that operatively contact surfaces of conical disks of a transmission have a nitrogen-enriched outer layer in the form of a carbon-nitrided layer, and wherein the conical disk surfaces engaged by the ~~rocker member~~ end faces of the thrust links have a nitrogen-enriched outer layer in the

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form of a carbon-nitrided layer.

Claim 3 (currently amended): A continuously variable, conical disk transmission, said transmission comprising: a first shaft and a second shaft, whereby on each of the first and the second shafts two conical disks are provided with substantially frustum-like surfaces facing toward one another, and wherein at least one conical disk per shaft is axially movable relative to the shaft, wherein at least the frustum-like surfaces of the conical disks that operatively frictionally contact an endless torque-transmitting means include a nitrogen-enriched outer surface layer [[,]] in the form of a carbon-nitrided layer, and wherein end surfaces of the endless torque-transmitting means that engage the conical disk surfaces ~~engaged by the rocker member end faces~~ have a nitrogen-enriched outer layer in the form of a carbon-nitrided layer.

Claims 4 through 6 (canceled).

Claim 7 (previously presented): A plate-link chain in accordance with claim 1, wherein the nitrogen content of each of the carbon-nitrided layers is between about 0.05% and about 0.1%.

Claim 8 (previously presented): A plate-link chain in accordance with claim 1, wherein after carbon-nitriding the rocker members are subjected to a case hardening

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process.

Claim 9 (previously presented): A plate-link chain in accordance with claim 8, wherein the case hardening depth is at least 0.3 mm.

Claim 10 (previously presented): A plate-link chain in accordance with claim 8, wherein the case hardening depth is at least 0.5 mm.

Claim 11 (previously presented): A thrust link belt in accordance with claim 2, wherein the nitrogen content of each of the carbon-nitrided layers is between about 0.05% and about 0.

Claim 12 (currently amended): A thrust link belt in accordance with claim 2, wherein after carbon-nitriding the ~~rocker members~~ end faces of the thrust links are subjected to a case hardening process.

Claim 13 (previously presented): A thrust link belt in accordance with claim 12, wherein the case hardening depth is at least 0.3 mm.

Claim 14 (previously presented): A thrust link belt in accordance with claim 12, wherein the case hardening depth is at least 0.5 mm.

Claim 15 (previously presented): A continuously variable, conical disk

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transmission in accordance with claim 3, wherein the nitrogen content of each of the carbon-nitrided layers is between about 0.05% and about 0.1%.

Claim 16 (currently amended): A continuously variable, conical disk transmission in accordance with claim 3, wherein after carbon-nitriding the ~~rocker members~~ end surfaces of the endless torque-transmitting means are subjected to a case hardening process.

Claim 17 (previously presented): A continuously variable, conical disk transmission in accordance with claim 16, wherein the case hardening depth is at least 0.3 mm.

Claim 18 (previously presented): A continuously variable, conical disk transmission in accordance with claim 16, wherein the case hardening depth is at least 0.5 mm.

Claim 19 (previously presented): A plate link chain in accordance with claim 1, wherein the rocker members undergo an annealing treatment at a temperature of from about 780°C to about 1050°C in a carburizing atmosphere that includes a carbon-containing gas selected from the group consisting of natural gas, propane, ammonia, and mixtures thereof for a time sufficient to obtain a desired case hardening depth, and wherein the rocker members are subsequently cooled to a hardening temperature with subsequent martensitic hardening by quenching to a temperature below a

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martensitic formation temperature and tempered at a temperature of from about 150°C to about 250°C.

Claim 20 (currently amended): A thrust link belt in accordance with claim 2, wherein the thrust links undergo an annealing treatment at a temperature of from about 780°C to about 1050°C in a carburizing atmosphere that includes a carbon-containing gas selected from the group consisting of natural gas, propane, ammonia, and mixtures thereof for a time sufficient to obtain a desired case hardening depth, and wherein the ~~rocker members~~ end faces of the thrust links are subsequently cooled to a hardening temperature with subsequent martensitic hardening by quenching to a temperature below a martensitic formation temperature and tempered at a temperature of from about 150°C to about 250°C.

Claim 21 (currently amended): A continuously variable, conical disk transmission in accordance with claim 3, wherein the conical disks undergo an annealing treatment at a temperature of from about 780°C to about 1050°C in a carburizing atmosphere that includes a carbon-containing gas selected from the group consisting of natural gas, propane, ammonia, and mixtures thereof for a time sufficient to obtain a desired case hardening depth, and wherein the ~~rocker members~~ end surfaces of the endless torque-transmitting means that contact the conical disks are subsequently cooled to a hardening temperature with subsequent martensitic hardening by quenching to a temperature below a martensitic formation temperature and tempered at a temperature of from about 150°C to about 250°C.

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Claim 22 (currently amended): A plate-link chain in accordance with claim 1, wherein the carbon-nitrided ~~layer has~~ layers have a nitrogen content of at least about 0.01% and ~~has~~ have a thickness of at least about 50 μm .

Claim 23 (currently amended): A thrust link belt in accordance with claim 2, wherein the carbon-nitrided ~~layer has~~ layers have a nitrogen content of at least about 0.01% and ~~has~~ have a thickness of at least about 50 μm .

Claim 24 (currently amended): A continuously variable, conical disk transmission in accordance with claim 3, wherein the carbon-nitrided ~~layer has~~ layers have a nitrogen content of at least about 0.01% and ~~has~~ have a thickness of at least about 50 μm .